

Dr. and Mrs. Roland M. Jermyn III
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Dear Representative Guerrero and Senator Maynard,

We write this testimony in support of HB5279 - AN ACT AUTHORIZING BONDS OF THE STATE FOR DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENTS TO FOREST ROAD IN NEW HAVEN. We live at 80 Alston Avenue in New Haven, just downhill from Susan Papa and David Schatz at 999 Forest Road, who are just across Forest Road from the main driveway of The Hopkins School. We have been dealing with issues related to water run-off down the hill from Forest Road for the 3 1/2 years since we bought our home. The issue came to a head last summer.

On the afternoon of Friday, August 10, after about 30 minutes of heavy rain, we noticed that there was a river of muddy water flowing down part of our backyard. Water runs down the driveway of Hopkins, overwhelms the drains on Forest Road, and rushes down our neighbors' driveway straight into our yard. As this has happened on several previous occasions, we knew to hasten to our basement to survey the damage and turn on the pump we purchased after a similar incident the previous year. Shortly after entering the basement, we heard a crash followed by the roar of falling water. Part of the basement wall had given way, and there was, quite literally, a waterfall coming into our basement. The entire floor was covered in water within 30 seconds, and the water level continued to rise to about 8 inches at its deepest point. The river of water coming down the hill toward our house covered 3/4 of our back yard, and flowed against the exterior of our house from our backdoor, all the way around to the front door. Had the level risen another inch or two, it would have breeched our backdoor and begun to flood our first floor. Water continued to flow into our basement long after the rain had ended, and it took hours to pump out as much as possible. To top it all off, similar flooding happened all over again, to a slightly lesser degree, less than 24 hours later.

We were then faced with an enormous clean-up job, major repairs, and the very expensive prospect of having to reconfigure our backyard to prevent further damage. We have since spent thousands and thousands of dollars implementing a drainage system in our own yard in an effort to protect our home from further damage. As responsible home owners, we are willing to invest the time, energy and money that is necessary to maintain our own property, but we need help to resolve this worsening situation.

A meeting facilitated by Representative Dillon was held shortly after the above-described incident, which included neighbors, officials from the Hopkins School, the state Department of Transportation and New Haven alderman Sergio Rodriguez. The Department of Transportation admitted that the drains on that section of Forest Road are outdated and inadequate. Hopkins officials admitted to increased development on their property, leading to more run-off. While the meeting was a step in the right direction, the conclusion reached by most of the officials present seemed to be that the problem should be solved by someone else. The bottom line is that this is a state highway, and state funds are needed to solve this problem.

We love where we live, but have the misfortune of being in the direct line of fire for the worst of this flash flooding down the hill from the school. The drains on Forest Road are simply inadequate to handle the water that rushes down the Hopkins driveway during even a moderate rainfall. When there is a heavy rain the results can be catastrophic. Not only is there risk to personal property, but also to the safety of those trying to drive on busy Forest Road (CT- 122) during such floods. This is not a problem that we can solve alone. We need your help.

Thank you for time and your assistance with this matter.

Sincerely,

Holly and Roland Jermyn